

Rules for Making Powerpoint Presentations

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- A good slide in Powerpoint makes no more than 2 or 3 points, and these points should augment, emphasize, and explain the speaker's words.
- For complicated subject matter, use 2 or 3 simple figures rather than one complex, cluttered and unclear figure. A series of slides that build on each other is very effective.
- Effective labels for slides are briefer and larger than those for publication. Titles should be 40-44 point font (14 mm) and text 32 point (11 mm). Bold and italic labelling should be saved for special emphasis.
- Slide titles should be relatively short – 1 line only.
- If using colour, stick to primary, bright, and clear colours.
- Do not use a photo as a background for the slide. It may be good artistically but it distracts from the points you are making.
- Word slides should contain no more than 5 short statements. The information on the slide should be simplified to the point of being skeletal. It is up to the presenter to fill in gaps. You should never have more than 30 words on a slide. 20 would be better.
- Presenters should not read word slides to the audience. The audience can read the slide faster than the presenter can speak it!
- If all the information on a slide is not valuable to the audience, *leave it out*. Take the time to adapt figures or tables for your presentation.
- A good average is one slide per minute of talk. If you have more, you are going too fast for the audience.
- If people remember your presentation, they will remember only one or two key points. Summarize these at the end of your talk.
- Never never never put 2 or 3 slides or photos on a Powerpoint since no one will be able to read the labels.
- Go to the back of the room and look at your Powerpoint presentation. If you need binoculars to read the slides, go back to step 1.